

Minidoka County

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DEPT. OF LABOR

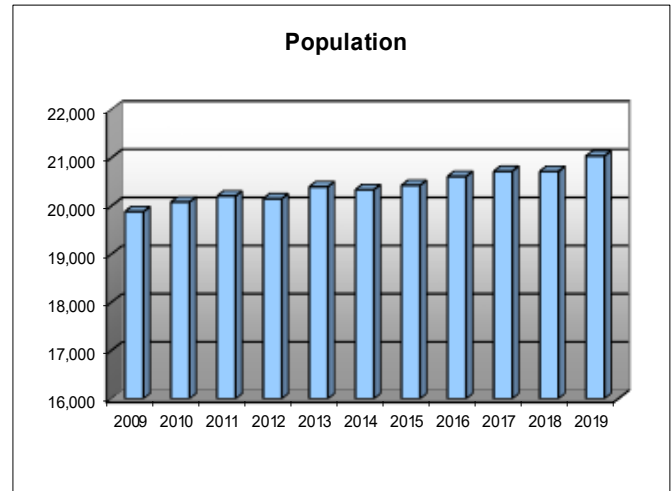
September 2020

Workforce Trends

Population

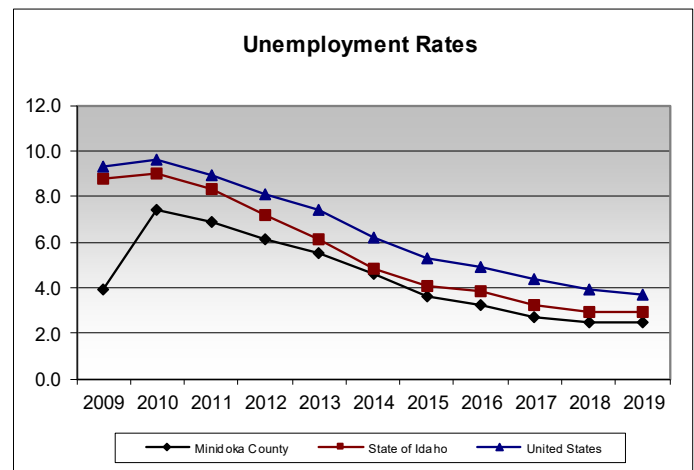
The population of Minidoka County is growing after a series of starts and stops. Incremental increases in seven of the last 10 years produced a 5.8% increase over the decade to 2019's estimate of 21,039. Its greatest growth was in 2019 at 1.5%. Rupert, the county seat, shows a 2019 estimated population of 5,893. The downtown core has retained its historic buildings including the iconic Wilson Theatre, renovated with community collaboration. The downtown plaza is one of the few remaining in Idaho, continuing to be the centerpiece of the community.

Traditionally dependent on agriculture and food processing, the county economy has diversified to include durable manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade tied to an agricultural base. Wages tend toward the low end — a challenge in attracting and retaining workers but appealing to new businesses. National employers have been willing to pay higher wages and offer benefits. Renewed economic vitality, the area's scenic beauty and the lure of nearby recreation are drawing new residents and companies. Outlook is favorable despite COVID-19 woes.



Labor Force & Employment

Minidoka County is commonly joined with Cassia County and referred to as the Mini-Cassia area. Labor force growth was strong in 2019, a surge of 3.7% or another 400 workers. The labor force grew by 13.8% since 2009, adding 1,200 workers to the county. Employment in Minidoka County has traditionally been seasonal with farm jobs, fresh pack potato operations, sugar and potato processing. The city of Burley lies in both Cassia and Minidoka counties—divided by the Snake River. Linked economically, politically and socially, the area offers a labor pool with a strong work ethic and a strategic location with convenient access to commercial rail and I-84 with I-86 nearby. The unemployment rate peaked at 10.2 percent in 1986 dropping to a record low of 2.5 percent in 2018 until COVID-19 abrupt closures hit. In 2003, the J.R. Simplot Co. closed its Heyburn plant, idling 600 workers—spiking unemployment to 7.7 percent. After closure, the plant along the Snake River was donated to the city of Burley for an industrial park,



which now houses a retail outlet, a restaurant associated with the cheese plant and Gem State Processing, a potato dehydrator based out of Pasco, Washington. A previous tenant, Renova Ethanol, lost its half-built plant in bankruptcy proceedings with assets purchased by Natural Chem Holdings. Double L Manufacturing constructed a new plant for its custom-designed potato harvesting equipment marketed globally. PerforMix and WillTran have opened facilities in Minidoka County, both with ties to southwestern Idaho.

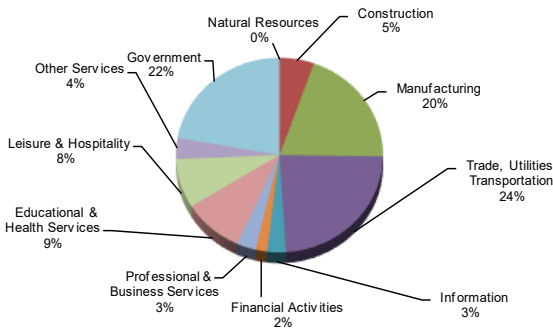
Labor Force	Aug 19	Aug 20
Civilian Labor Force	11,439	11,666
Total Employment	11,141	11,305
Unemployed	298	361
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	3.1
State of Idaho % Unemployed	2.9	4.2
U.S. % Unemployed	3.7	8.4

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Civilian Labor Force	10,051	10,468	10,566	10,383	10,383	10,405	10,689	10,893	10,988	11,033	11,442
Unemployment	392	777	734	631	574	474	384	348	295	281	291
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	7.4	6.9	6.1	5.5	4.6	3.6	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.5
Employment	9,659	9,691	9,832	9,752	9,809	9,931	10,305	10,545	10,693	10,752	11,151

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Nonfarm Payroll Jobs for 2019



Wages & Income

Minidoka County ranks 7th regionally and 25th among Idaho's 44 counties based on per capita income. Growth has been robust at 30% since 2009, ranking 26th among Idaho's 44 counties. Minidoka County experienced a significant 14% record increase between 2010 and 2011, likely due to commodity pricing. The per capita income grew 5.6% from 2017, greater than the state and nation, at 4.3% and 4.9%, respectively. Minidoka's per capita income is 87% of the state's and 70% of the nation's per capita income.

Average covered employment rose 2.6% from 2018 with average wages up 2.5%. Manufacturing employment reported the highest growth at 8.5% or 105 workers with a drop in wages at -4.5%. Other services grew its average wage by 9.1% from 2018.

Minidoka County's location on I-84 continues to reap rewards as does progressive community investment in Rupert's downtown. The county outlook is positive amid solid job, population and civilian labor force growth.

Major Employers

Amalgamated Sugar	Idahoan Foods
Budget Motor	Jentzsch-Kearl Farms
Brewster West Dairy	Love's Travel Stops
Double L Manufacturing	Minidoka Memorial Hosp.
Gem State Processing	Sun Valley Potatoes
Gossner Foods	Ridley's Food Corporation

South Central Idaho Occupational Wages*		Median Wage
	Entry Wage	
Cashiers	\$8.96	\$10.99
Construction Labor	\$10.45	\$14.79
Farmworkers, Farm & Ranch Animals	\$8.97	\$12.66
Food Batchmakers	\$12.88	\$17.35
Graders/sorters, ag products	\$8.43	\$10.82
Janitors & Cleaners	\$9.90	\$13.50
Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	\$11.43	\$15.96
Medical Secretaries	\$12.52	\$16.28
Nursing Assistants	\$11.00	\$13.22
Registered Nurses*	\$23.14	\$31.54
Teachers, Elementary	\$33,645	\$52,710
Teachers, Secondary	\$36,831	\$48,703
Tellers	\$11.06	\$13.55
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	\$15.70	\$19.99

* Additional occupational wage data can be found on the Idaho Department of Labor website at lmi.idaho.gov.

Covered Employment & Average Annual Wages Per Job for 2009, 2018 & 2019		2009		2018		2019	
		Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages	Average Employment	Average Wages
Total Covered Wages		6,664	\$29,232	8,017	\$37,937	8,221	\$38,872
Agriculture		1,262	\$26,887	1,413	\$37,312	1,470	\$38,999
Mining		**	**	**	**	**	**
Construction		317	\$29,009	374	\$45,850	365	\$46,506
Manufacturing		946	\$46,232	1,239	\$52,224	1,344	\$50,168
Trade, Utilities & Transportation		1,293	\$31,129	1,632	\$43,516	1,607	\$44,050
Information		117	\$32,354	186	\$37,469	197	\$37,496
Financial Activities		132	\$31,169	119	\$41,646	122	\$41,549
Professional and Business Services		149	\$33,460	205	\$32,114	202	\$33,306
Educational and Health Services		318	\$21,959	587	\$23,654	638	\$25,847
Leisure and Hospitality		509	\$10,955	570	\$14,623	552	\$15,644
Other Services		158	\$18,647	229	\$28,825	236	\$31,449
Government		1,465	\$26,855	1,463	\$34,946	1,487	\$37,112

Per Capita Income	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Minidoka County	\$28,165	\$28,526	\$32,440	\$33,783	\$33,901	\$35,533	\$37,155	\$36,981	\$36,149	\$38,159
State of Idaho	\$31,186	\$31,957	\$33,515	\$35,188	\$36,200	\$37,896	\$39,857	\$40,670	\$42,094	\$43,901
United States	\$39,284	\$40,546	\$42,735	\$44,599	\$44,851	\$47,058	\$48,978	\$49,870	\$51,885	\$54,446

Information provided by Bureau of Economic Analysis

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